

Delaware Lackawanna and Western Railroad Crossing Guard House  
(Delaware Lackawanna and Western Railroad Elevated Watch Tower)  
Central Avenue at Pendleton Street  
Cortland  
Cortland County  
New York

HABS No. NY-5595

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7A-

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. NY-5595

DELAWARE LACKAWANNA AND WESTERN RAILROAD CROSSING GUARD HOUSE  
(DELAWARE LACKAWANNA AND WESTERN RAILROAD ELEVATED WATCH TOWER)

Location: Central Avenue at Pendleton Street, across Central Avenue from the old passenger station, in 1966 the Greyhound Bus Terminal, Cortland, Cortland County, New York.

Present Owner: Erie Lackawanna Railroad Company, Midland Building, Cleveland, Ohio.

Present Occupant: Erie Lackawanna Railroad Company.

Present Use: Crossing guard house.

Brief Statement of Significance: An example of the small supportive structures of the railroad industry made obsolete by automation.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners: Delaware Lackawanna and Western Railroad until merger October 17, 1960 with Erie Lackawanna Railroad Company. (Source: Mr. Harry Trepasso, Erie Lackawanna Freight Office, 90 Central Avenue, Cortland, New York.)
2. Date of erection: elevated in 1950, constructed c. 1860. Mr. Samuel Brackett, 4 Loope Street, Cortland, New York, who worked for the Railroad for 51 years, felt sure that the guard houses were elevated "at least 45 years ago... around 1920."

Mr. Cleland Cook, 148½ Homer Avenue, Cortland, New York, a railroad historian, dated the building of the "old" guard houses as soon after 1854 when the Delaware Lackawanna and Western bought the railroad.

Mr. George Frank, Erie Lackawanna Railroad Company, Midland Building, Cleveland, Ohio, present owners, stated that it was "constructed in 1950 replacing structures that were built about 1900." (Letter to Miss Dorothy E. Graves, December 6, 1965.)

Mr. Charles McEvoy, Clinton Avenue Extension, Cortland, New York, agreed with the 1950 date for the elevation, but felt sure that the "old shanties" used by the men who were

DL & W RAILROAD CROSSING GUARD HOUSE  
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the guards, were elevated, not new ones built when the gates became automatic in 1950.

3. Architect: Unknown. (Source: Mr. George C. Frank, Erie Lackawanna Railroad Company, Midland Building, Cleveland, Ohio, "Unfortunately we have no plans or diagrams of these structures in our Engineering Department.")
4. Original plans, construction, etc.: Plan for "D.L. & W. RR Standard Gate House" of April 16, 1907 is almost identical to the Central Avenue Railroad Crossing Guard House (see data pages 5-6, photocopies in field records).
5. Alterations and additions: None.

B. Sources of Information:

1. Mr. Orris Ryan, 103 River Street, Cortland, New York.
2. Mr. Stanley Baker (no address).

C. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated:

1. Jennings, Francis Donald. A Chronicle of Transportation in the Tioughniogo Valley.
2. Library of the New York State Historical Association. Mr. Paul Z. DuBois, Cooperstown, New York 13326.
3. Delaware Lackawanna and Western vouchers; Mr. Howard L. Applegate, Administrator of Manuscripts, 401 Carnegie Library, Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York 13210.
4. Archives of Olin Library; Miss Kathleen Jacklin, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York.

Prepared by Dorothy E. Graves  
Cortland, New York  
July, 1966

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: One of the few remaining frame elevated watch towers designed with brackets and pagoda-like upswinging eaves.
2. Condition of fabric: Fair.

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B. Description of the Exterior:

1. Dimensions: 6' x 6' approximately; elevated by steel frame to two story height.
2. Foundations: Cement foundation for steel post supporting guard house.
3. Wall construction: Frame, painted dark green; vertical boards below line of window sills, horizontal framing above.
4. Structural system: See photo-copy of plan of Delaware Lackawanna & Western Railroad Standard House, similar construction.
5. Porches: Entrance by straight steel ladder on west side.
6. Chimney: Stove pipe in center of peak roof.
7. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: Door on the fourth (west) side.
  - b. Windows: One square window off-center on each of the three sides, without a door.
8. Roof:
  - a. Shape, covering: Shingled low peak roof.
  - b. Cornice, eaves: Roof overhang of approximately 14" supported by simple wood brackets, one at each corner and two on each side.

C. Description of the Interior:

1. Floor plan: Square plan, approximately six feet to the side, with cut-off corners approximately 14" across.
2. Stairway: Ladder to entrance.
3. Flooring: Wood.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Wood.
5. Lighting, type of fixtures: Electric.
6. Heating: A central stove originally.

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D. Site and Surroundings:

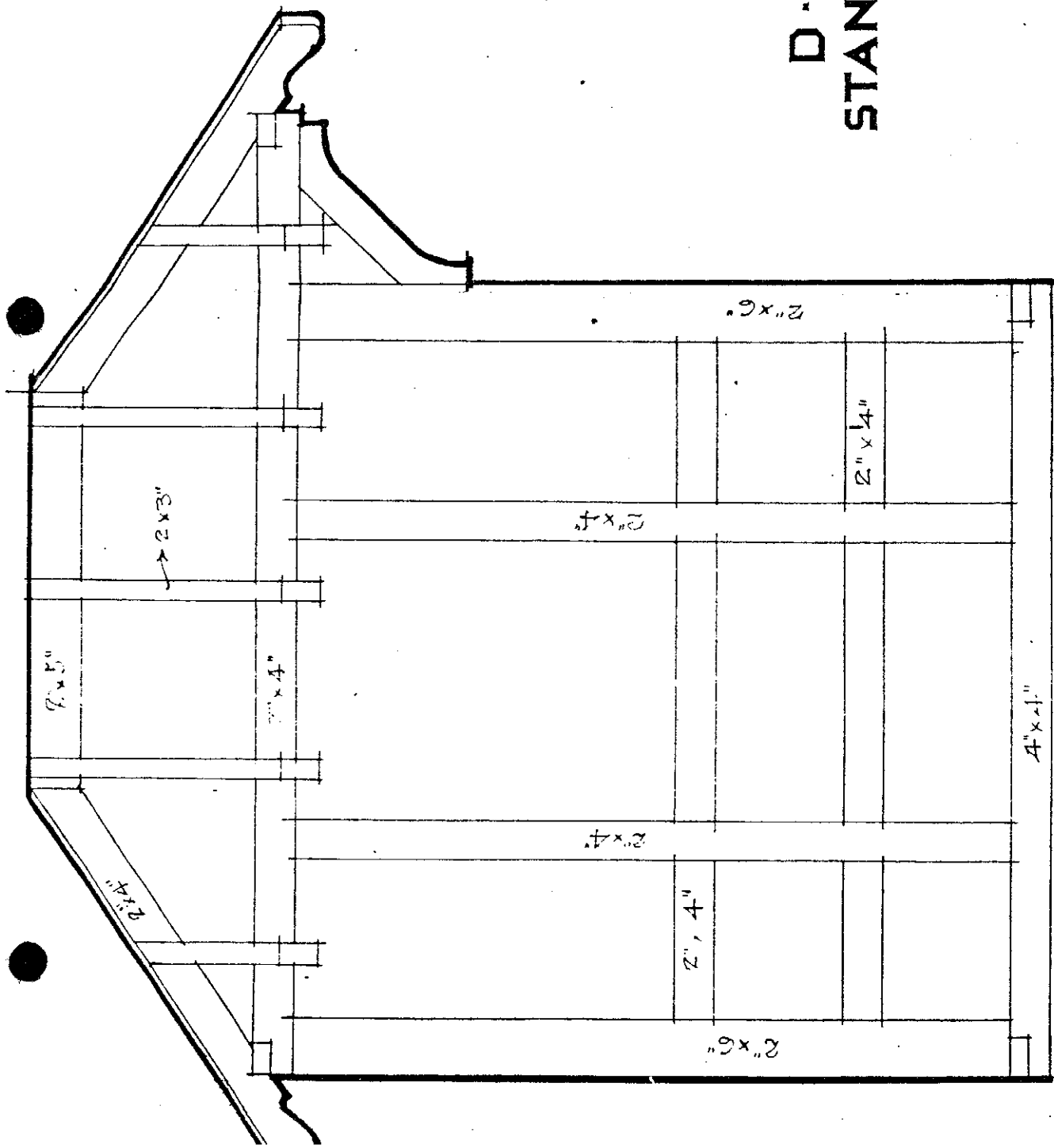
1. Orientation and general setting: The door faces west. Tracks are at the east. Central Avenue on the north.
2. Outbuildings: Small equipment and machine structure near the base.
3. Landscaping and walks: None. Tracks pass on the east of the tower.

Prepared by Dorothy E. Graves  
Cortland, New York  
April, 1966

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

These records are part of the documentation of structures in the Southern Tier of New York State, undertaken by HABS in cooperation with the Cortland County Historical Society and the Valley Development Foundation, Inc.

The project was under the general supervision of John Poppeliers, Chief of the Historic American Buildings Survey. The historical and architectural material was prepared by Dorothy E. Graves, April, 1966. Photographs were taken by Jack E. Boucher, April, 1966. The project was edited for deposit in the Library of Congress by Constance Werner Ramirez, October, 1974.



SHEET NO. 1.

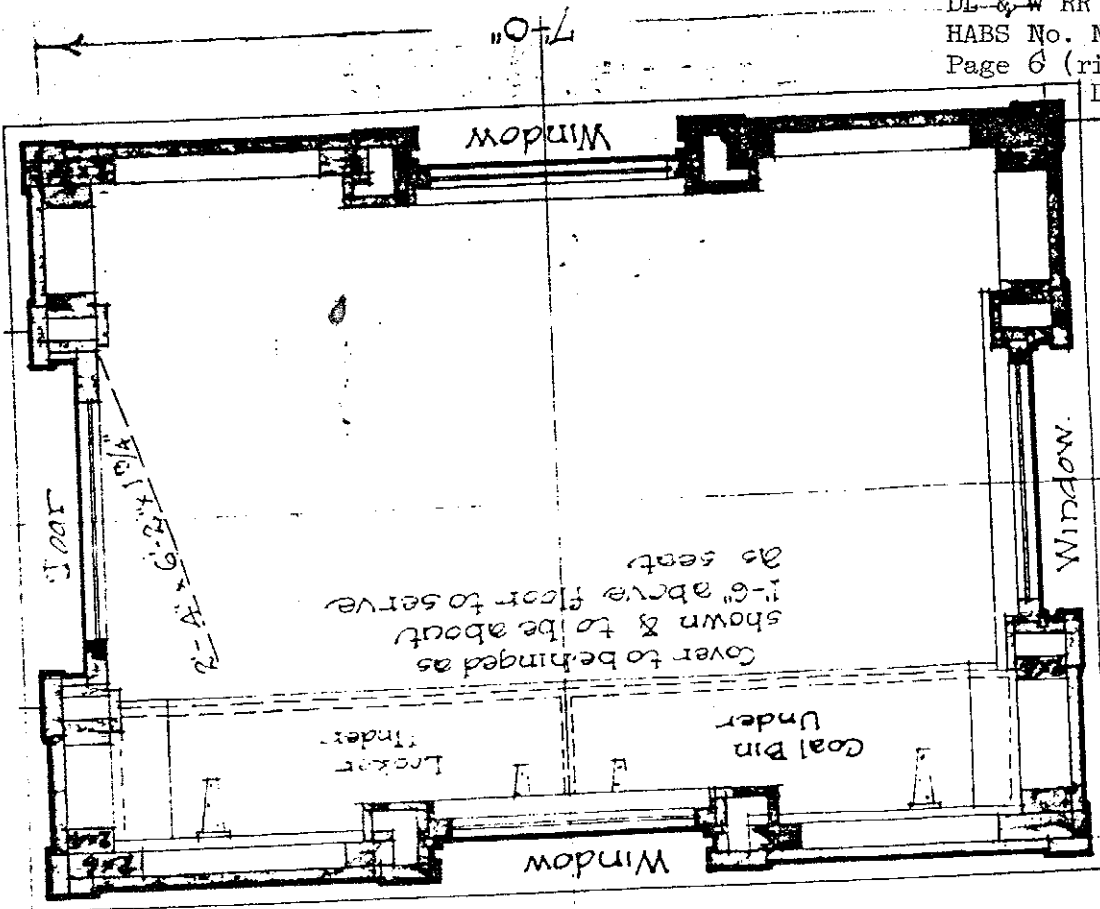
# D·L· & W·R·R· STANDARD GATE HOUSE

DL & W RR CROSSING GUARDHOUSE  
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Page 5 (left-half of Sheet  
1, D.L. & W.R.R Standard Gate  
House)

SCALE 3/4" = 1 FT.

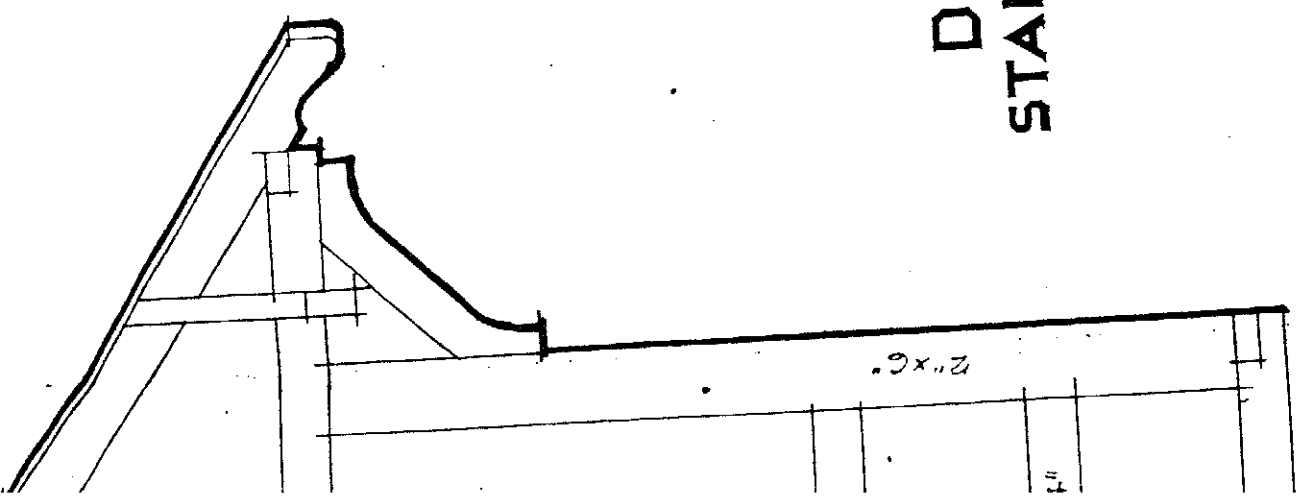
APRIL 16, 1907.

THE DIVISION OF THE STATE



PLAN

SHEET NO. 1.  
**D·L· & W·R·R·**  
**STANDARD GATE HOUSE**  
SCALE 3/4" = 1 FT.  
APRIL 16, 1907.



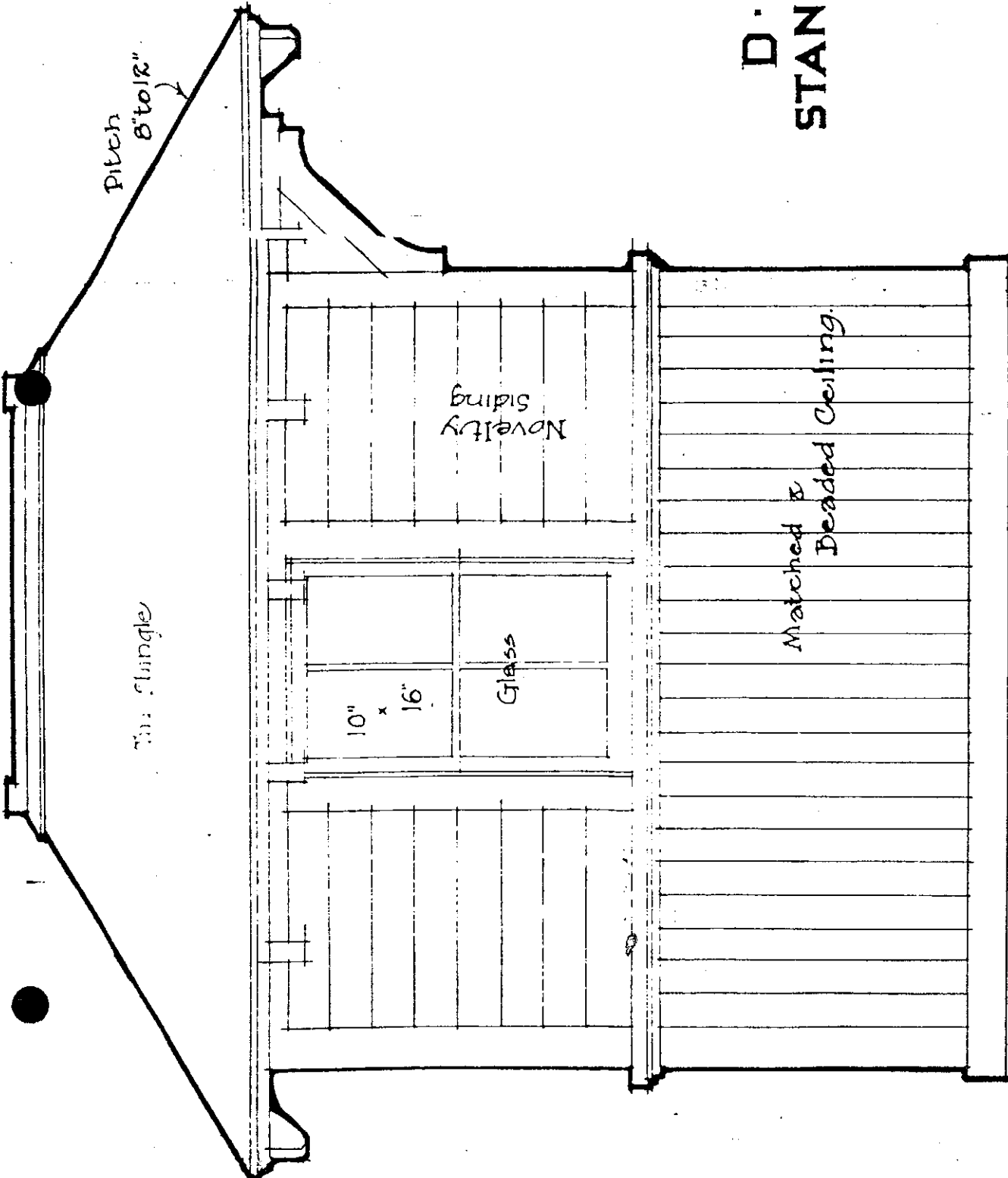
SHEET NO. 2.

D.L. & W.R.R.  
STANDARD GATE HOUSE

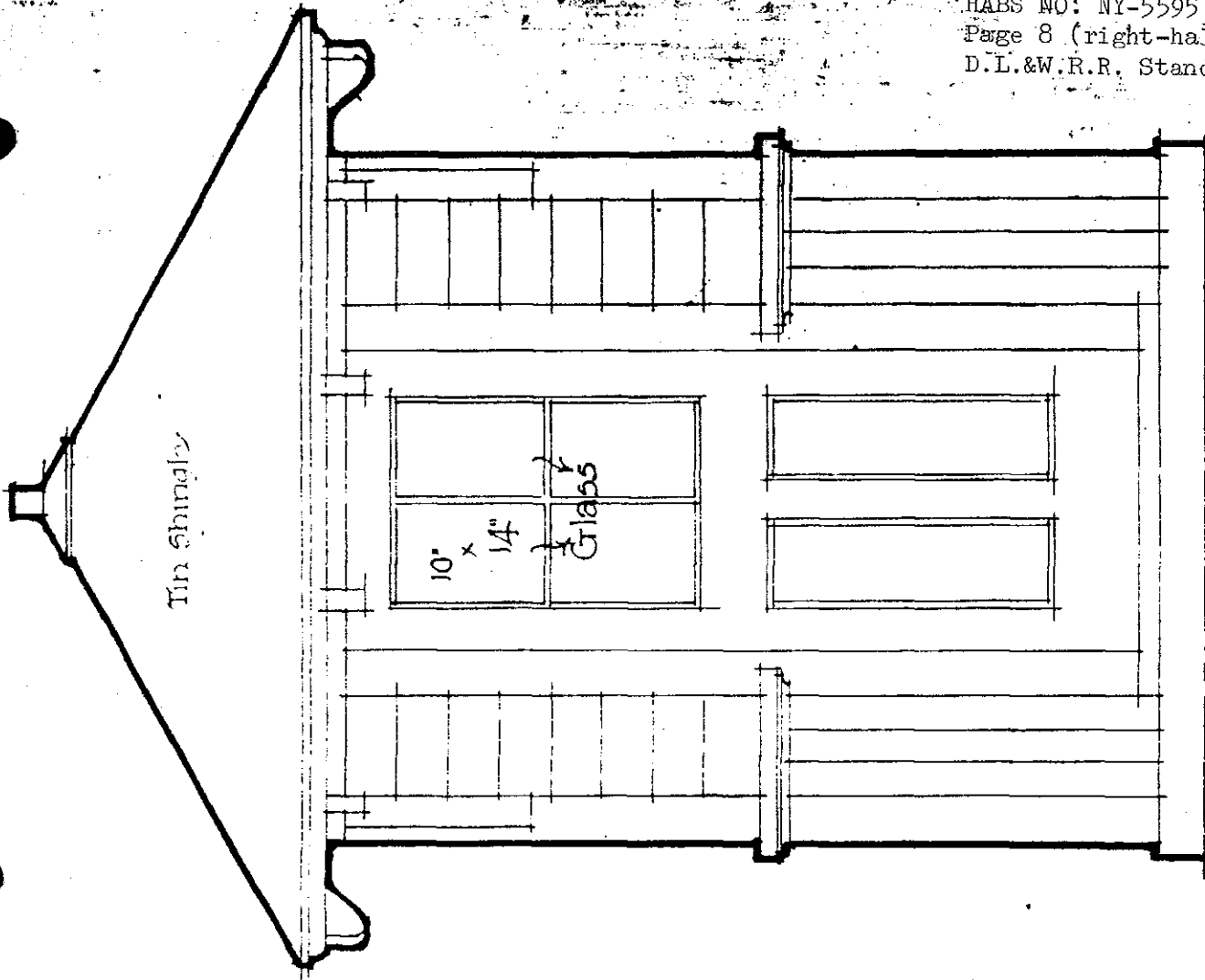
SCALE  $\frac{3}{4}$ " = 1 FT.

APRIL 16, 1907

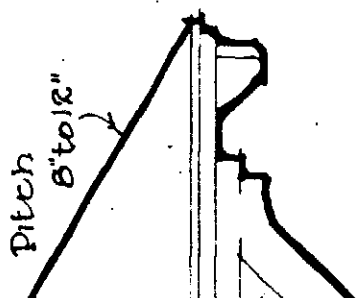
SIDE ELEVATION







FRONT ELEVATION



SHEET NO. 2.

**D · L · & W · R · R ·  
STANDARD GATE HOUSE**

SCALE  $\frac{3}{4}$ " = 1 FT.

APRIL 16, 1907